

filed 20 November 1997. The entirety of each of those applications is incorporated herein by reference.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION - -

Delete the first paragraph, at page 1, lines 3-8, and insert therefor the following:

--The present invention relates to a process and a plant for the treatment of vulcanized rubber of all kinds, such as tyres, conveyor belts, boots, shoes and other objects containing assembled rubber and polymer materials for the purpose of recycling the components by the relevant industries.--

Delete the fourth paragraph at page 2, lines 25-32, and insert therefor the following:

--GB 2,026,144 (1979) discloses a plant for the treatment of rubber waste and of synthetic materials coming from worn tyres. Thermal decomposition of the product, which is coarsely reduced, is carried out in a fluidized bed of sand at 800°C in the presence of oxygen. The gases produced by the decomposition are used and, at the end of the process, the reinforcing metals are recovered by means of magnets.--

Page 3, between lines 18 and 19, insert the following section heading:

--SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION--

Delete the first full paragraph, at page 4, lines 5-9, and insert therefor the following:

--B) The reduced waste is introduced into a reactor and treated for 30 minutes at 350°C with an OH⁻ ion generator, preferably a strong alkaline base such as molten NaOH. 3. Separation of the basic liquid and the residues coming from the treated rubber.--

Page 4, between lines 32 and 33, insert the following section heading:

- - BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS - -

Page 5, between lines 7 and 8, insert the following section heading:

- - DETAILED DESCRIPTION - -.

Delete the first full paragraph at page 5, lines 8-27, and insert therefor the following:

--As shown in Figure 1, crystallized NaOH in its original package is melted in the oven 1, at a temperature of 300 to 400°C, before being introduced into the master tank 5, which is provided with a heater and in which the NaOH is maintained at a temperature of 380° before being transferred to the reactor 13 into which the waste coming from the cropper 14 is also introduced. After 30 minutes of immersion and with stirring at the start of obtaining a temperature of 350°C, the liquid is conducted by the line 19, provided with a pump, to the buffer tank 20 and then sent to the master tank 5. The buffer tank is heated to a temperature of 380°C in order to prevent heat shocks occurring in the tank 5. Moreover, the buffer tank is designed to gather the precipitates and is organized for the separation and extraction of the small particles. The decomposition products from the reactor 13 are transferred to the neutralization tank 23 and, at the end of the treatment, the residues are transported to the magnetic sorting device 32 where the metals are separated from the polymers resulting from the treatment.--.

Delete the second and third full paragraphs at page 6, lines 5-31, and insert therefor, the following:

--The master tank 5 is equipped with conventional monitoring and control instruments 8 to 11, known to those skilled in the art, which monitor the conditions in the tank and actuate the electronic control actuators when transfers are made and when other actions are taken. The regulatory safety valve 7 prevents unexpected and accidental overpressures and the heating element 6 (which may be placed on the

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Delete the third paragraph, at page 8, line 15 - page 9, line 4, and insert therefor the following:

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